

FACTSHEET

Plant Protection & Quarantine

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

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EXCERPT for U.S. Exports

The United States is by far the world's largest exporter of agricultural products. American farmers, shippers, and tradespeople have thrived, and the Nation's economy has been nourished by the agricultural products harvested from America's fields, forests, and farms and shipped to markets all over the world.

Central to the successful trade in these agricultural products is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS encourages and promotes agricultural trade worldwide, and its Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) unit plays a key role in facilitating this trade. PPQ officials regularly engage in bilateral and multilateral talks to expand markets for thousands of American farmers and tradespeople. These officials also issue phytosanitary (plant health) certificates, when necessary, to document that the agricultural products for export have been inspected and are free of insects and diseases and conform to the importing country's phytosanitary regulations. And, if exporters run into complications with their properly certified goods being denied entry for phytosanitary reasons, PPQ will try to negotiate with foreign plant health authorities on behalf of the U.S. exporter.

Enter EXCERPT

One of the most supportive means in which PPQ facilitates exports is through EXCERPT, a computerized data base of the phytosanitary requirements for most countries to which the United States exports agricultural products. In cooperation with Purdue University and the State Plant Boards, PPQ developed this system to help identify the requirements for exporting agricultural commodities and to aid determination of whether phytosanitary

certificates can be issued for specific commodities. The EXCERPT data base is accessible not only to PPQ officers but also State and county officials, industry members, and foreign governments as well. If a U.S. exporter wanted, for example, to send flour to Mexico, that exporter could access the EXCERPT data base to find that they need a phytosanitary certificate and an import permit from the Mexican authorities. The same exporter would also be able to find out that there is no specific certification needed to ship fruit for consumption to Hong Kong. More than 2,400 State and Federal employees worldwide have access to the system.

EXCERPT contains the export summaries for more than 200 countries. The data base also lists the status of endangered species, commodities that are prohibited by specific countries, any changes in other countries' entry requirements, and foreign government contact information. EXCERPT even identifies ports that are authorized to certify for export those endangered and threatened plants protected by the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). For example, PPQ officials in San Francisco, CA, a CITES-approved port, can certify cacti for export.

Accessing EXCERPT

APHIS developed the program for the EXCERPT data base in cooperation with Purdue University's Center for Environmental and Regulatory Information Systems (CERIS). Customers may access the EXCERPT data base with their personal computers via the Internet. To subscribe to the EXCERPT data base, visit the CERIS Website at <http://www.ceris.purdue.edu> or contact CERIS/Purdue at (765) 494-4967. CERIS/Purdue charges a subscription fee for access to the system.

Benefits of EXCERPT

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, there are also many other features of this state-of-the-art system. For instance, because the information in the EXCERPT data base is constantly being updated whenever regulations change, customers can always count on retrieving the latest available information with just a few clicks of a mouse, or by placing a call to their local PPQ office or their State Department of Agriculture. Also, users have access to hotline support in case they have problems with the system. And, finally, EXCERPT is economically beneficial to customers because they are paying a reduced fee for shared services and support.

Exporting Into the Future

Agricultural trade is thriving, especially for American exporters. In 1998, the United States' agricultural exports were worth almost \$52 billion. And, with trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization chipping away at trade barriers, new markets will continue to open for exporters and trade will increase even more. APHIS' EXCERPT data base will be an enormous asset to this burgeoning flow of products from U.S. shores to markets all over the world. This progressive system will allow industry customers to ship their produce to markets all over the world with briefer delays for phytosanitary compliance while ensuring that commodities are well received when they reach those foreign shores.

Additional Information

For more information about APHIS and U.S. exports, visit the APHIS Website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> or contact

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